

CHARACTER SKTECH OF RUPERT BIRKIN



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Rupert Birkin, fictional protagonist character, a sickly introspective school inspector in the novel *Women in Love*; Birkin based on Lawrence himself, struggles to understand and act upon his desires. His relationship with his lover, Ursula, is full of conflicts, drives him toward self-awareness. He seeks an unsentimental partnership of equals, whereas her interests are more practical and physical; having somewhat Homosexual feelings for his co-male character, first identifies, when he suggests Ursula to use **RAINBOW** colored pencils during her teaching that is commonly known as gay pride flag.

W. W. Robson suggests that not the two sisters but Birkin is the logical starting-point. He is a man who has the right kind of human naturalness, showing itself in emotional spontaneity and mobility, and capacity for tenderness. He appears as a critic of society and would like mankind perish but has the will to live also. He is annoying and touching, sometimes unpleasant, sometimes likeable, in a credible way. If his peculiarities are Lawrence's own, they are presented quite objectively.

The philosophy of **Freidrich Nietzsche** has a major influence on Birkin, he is a man of religious temperament, but he can't believe in the God and Christianity or in any formal religion. He is repelled by the '**mechanized wilderness**' of the modern world, and by the disappearance of any clear significant purpose in living, that's why he has a deep dislike for the whole social structure of England and bourgeoisie among whom he lives. However,

he has no clear, positive idea of the change, he desire. He seeks a personal way of salvation for himself. He wants to try to live by a **RELIGION OF LOVE**. Birkin wants to '**transvaluation of all values**', in order to remake the world- '**ETERNAL RETURN**'. He thinks that work can't save humanity.

Birkin feels attracted by Ursula with whom he wants a satisfactory relation. But he doesn't believe that man and woman should merge themselves in each other. It should be a relationship between '**FULFILLED INDIVIDUALS**' who remain individuals. He wants the '**way of freedom**' in love with Ursula. He preaches her curious doctrines of sexual exclusiveness, sentimental and romantic love-idea. This power is the life-source to which Christianity, modern humanitarianism, and democracy have no access. He perceives, **ego-centric maternal possessiveness is the enemy of human life and growth**.

He escapes from his affair with Hermione because this affair has failed, and from inner temptation towards a cult of purely sensual, '**mindless experience**' represented by a west African statuette which he calls a sort of barbaric equivalent to the sentimental western idea of love which he feels to be decadent. The gift of three rings to Ursula symbolizes the conflict, and unsuitability of their marriage. It is after a prolonged conflict with himself and with Ursula that Birkin ultimately succeeds in achieving a satisfactory relationship with her.

He has a conviction that the love of a woman is not sufficient to satisfy a man, and that the man-woman relationship must be supplemented with a **man-to-man relationship**. He demands equilibrium in his relationship with her. To him, it seems that '**woman is always so horrible and clutching, she has such greed of possession, and self-importance in love**'. He likes

‘TRIANGLE RELATION’ just like **Hedda Gabler**, because he too misses the company of a third person in his life for completing **‘HOLY TRINITY’**.

Birkin’s stoning of the moon-image in the lake symbolizes his violent attack on woman and woman’s possessiveness and tyranny which is difficult to drive away because it persists in re-forming, self-contained, isolated and self-conscious. This is an act which destroys a perfect stillness to create interchange between light and dark, male and female that produces momentary peace.

Birkin’s desire for a **BROMANCE FRIENDSHIP** with Gerald, **‘we are mentally; spiritually intimate, therefore, we should be more or less physically intimate too’**. He seems to penetrate into Gerald’s more solid, more diffuse bulk, to interfuse his body through the body of the other. This may be a homosexual relationship - forbidden by the developed intellect but demanded by certain natures as necessary for their fulfillment.

Complimenting Gerald on his beautiful body and plastic shape; Birkin says, **‘yes we should enjoy everything’**. The description of the wrestling bout with his **‘GOOD-ANGEL’** has an obvious sexual overtones, he desires for a blood-brotherhood with Gerald and his regret that Gerald’s death has deprived him of the opportunity of an **‘eternal union with man’ ‘another kind of love’**. Here, Birkin resembles **Lisby Avery** from **‘Little Willow’** who confesses her love for **Simon Byrne** after his death. Lawrence fully approves Birkin’s quest of such relationship.

Birkin enjoys his contact with nature; sometime, he walks out of the house and wanders to a valley-side where there is plenty of vegetation. He wants to touch all the flowers, trees and bushes. He takes off his clothes, and sits

down naked among the primroses. It seems such a fine, cool, subtle touch all over him, he even enjoys the pricks of the thorns, the sharp bristle of the fire-boughs, the light whip of the hazel on his shoulders, and so on because nature is a soothing element for him.

In short, Birkin's views on woman, marriage, and sex and his character reveal Lawrence integrity in personal, especially in sexual relationship; it's a story about **MAN IN LOVE** who appreciates '**ETERNAL TRIANGLE**' in relation. He is a poetic figure who quotes the references from Byron's poetry, Shakespeare's Hamlet and Julius Caesar, and Romeo and Juliet because he likes classic period rather than modernity. But ironically he falls in love with a **MODERN MAN** who is an industrialist. He appears to Ursula as an original son of God who has sacred yet sensual presence in her life. However all these are ideas of Lawrence himself those are beautifully delivered by Birkin's conducts.